

John Young

From: Charles Nylander [nylander@lanl.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2004 4:03 PM
To: charles_lundstrom@nmenv.state.nm.us; sandra_martin@nmenv.state.nm.us; john_young@nmenv.state.nm.us; jerry_schoeppner@nmenv.state.nm.us; curt_frischkorn@nmenv.state.nm.us
Cc: mjohansen@doeal.gov
Subject: Groundwater Protection Program Notification

Earlier this afternoon, Mat Johansen, DOE/LASO and I attempted to telephone you to discuss the enclosed notification. Many of you were not available, and we left voice messages in most cases. Please be apprised of the following information.

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION PROGRAM NOTIFICATION

Groundwater samples were collected from well R-15 located in Mortandad Canyon during routine monitoring on December 15, 2003. The Laboratory has just received laboratory analyses indicating that perchlorate was detected in well R-15, which is completed in the regional aquifer. Three separate analytical results of 4.85, 4.86, and 4.77 parts per billion (ppb) appear to confirm that perchlorate is present in concentrations slightly above the 4.0 ppb minimum detection level for the Ion Chromatography Method (EPA 314). These data are consistent with validated characterization data collected at well R-15 during May 2001, with a perchlorate concentration of 4.19 ppb. The 2001 data was previously reported to the NMED in the R-15 Geochemistry Report (LA-13896-MS) and an ER Project Technical Quarterly Report. A news release announcing this new information will be released today.

Although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not set a drinking water standard for perchlorate, it is estimated that the standard will be established in the one-to-18 ppb range. To date, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has not established an action level or regulatory standard for perchlorate. Although these concentrations of perchlorate were detected in well R-15, monitoring results from the closest Los Alamos County water supply wells (i.e. PM-5, PM-4, PM-2) have not detected elevated levels of perchlorate. Samples from the regional aquifer well R-13 located down-gradient from well R-15 near the boundary with San Ildefonso Pueblo have not detected elevated levels of perchlorate either.

On February 11, 2004 the NMED approved the Mortandad Canyon Groundwater Work Plan, Revision I, which contains detailed plans for the investigation of groundwater in Mortandad Canyon. The Work Plan provides for the installation of new characterization wells in the alluvial aquifer, intermediate perched aquifer, and the regional aquifer underlying Mortandad Canyon this spring. Included in the Work Plan is a new regional aquifer well to be constructed on San Ildefonso Pueblo land down-gradient from the boundary in Mortandad Canyon. Implementation of this Work Plan will accelerate the determination of the nature and extent of groundwater contamination in Mortandad Canyon and provide the foundation for any remediation that may be needed.

Please feel free to contact me at 665-4681 if you wish to discuss these recent data. Thank you.



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LA-13896-MS (R-15, perchlorate, TA-501 Mortandad Canyon)